

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given to the present application. Claims 18-29 are now pending in the application. Claims 1-4 and 7 have been cancelled. Claims 9-15 have been withdrawn. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sorg (U.S. Pat. No. 2,185,741, hereinafter Sorg). As Applicant has cancelled these claims, Applicant asserts this rejection is moot. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 18, 20, 21 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ziebold (U.S. Pat. No. 3,135,295, hereinafter Ziebold). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant submits independent Claim 18 includes “bonding the flexible duct structure to be in direct contact with an end of the rigid duct structure...” Applicant respectfully submits this feature is not taught or suggested by Ziebold.

As stated previously, Ziebold does not disclose whatsoever the bonding of a flexible duct structure directly to a rigid duct structure as claimed, but rather the use of an attachment means which is shown as an additional sleeve as noted by the Examiner. Hence, Applicant respectfully asserts Ziebold fails to teach or suggest “bonding the flexible duct structure to be in direct contact with an end of the rigid duct structure” as

claimed but rather the use of an intermediary sleeve. Thus Applicant submits independent Claim 18 is drawn of a scope to be allowable over Ziebold. Claims 20, 21 and 24, which depend from independent Claim 18, are also believed to be patentable and in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

Claims 18-20 and 24-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Pfleger (U.S. Pat. No. 5,560,398, hereinafter Pfleger). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant notes independent Claim 18 now includes the limitation of bonding the flexible duct structure to be in direct contact with an end of the rigid duct structure.” Pfleger appears to teach a multilayer conduit made up of layers of polymeric materials (Column 6, Figure 1). Pfleger does not disclose or suggest whatsoever the bonding of flexible duct structure to be in direct contact with an end of the rigid duct structure” but rather appears to teach a sandwiched multilayer conduit wherein the inner and outer layers are bonded along the entire length of the inner and outer layer (Column 4, lines 27-29, Figure 1). Thus, as Pfleger fails to disclose or suggest Applicant’s invention as claimed, Applicant respectfully asserts independent Claim 18 is patentable over Pfleger and in condition for allowance. Furthermore, since Claims 19, 20 and 24 depend from independent Claim 18, these claims are also believed to be patentable.

With regard to independent Claim 25, Applicant notes independent Claim 25 includes “coupling the first rigid duct structure directly to a first end of the flexible duct structure.” As stated previously, Pfleger does not disclose this feature nor would it be obvious to modify Pfleger to include this feature. Accordingly, Applicant believes

independent Claim 25 is patentable over Pfleger and in condition for allowance. In addition, since Claim 26 depends from independent Claim 25, Claim 25 is also believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 21-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pfleger in view of Timmons (U.S. Pat. No. 5,062,457, hereinafter Timmons). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant notes Claims 21-23 all depend from independent Claim 18. As stated previously, Applicant believes Claim 18 is patentable and in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant believes Claims 21-23 are also patentable and in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

Claims 28 and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pfleger in view of Timmons and Tally (U.S. Pat. No. 3,992,505, hereinafter Tally). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 28 has been amended to include “a second tube portion having an end directly affixed to the first tube-shaped portion ...” As discussed previously, Pfleger fails to teach or suggest this feature as does Timmons. Likewise, Tally also does not disclose this feature as claimed. In particular, Tally fails to teach or suggest the joining of the first and second tube-shaped portions directly at an end. Accordingly, Applicant believes independent Claim 28 is patentable and in condition for

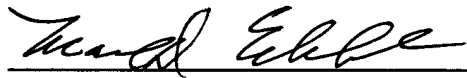
allowance. In addition, as Claim 29 depends from independent Claim 28, Applicant believes this claim is also in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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